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Ray Bail Request Rejected

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A judge yesterday rejected James Earl Ray's request to go free on bail to pursue a liver transplant that his lawyers say is his only hope of living for more than a few months.

State Judge Cheryl Blackburn said in Nashville, Tenn., that Ray's lawyers failed to produce evidence that his guilty plea should be set aside so that he could be granted a trial for the 1968 murder of Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis.

Ray, 69, is serving a 99-year sentence at a Nashville prison. Tennessee hospitals have refused to consider him as a transplant candidate because of his age, and prison officials won't let him travel out of state.